

Message Text

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41

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 H-02 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 AID-05

CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 TRSE-00

XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01

AGR-05 DODE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 NSCE-00 NSC-05 SS-15

STR-04 CEA-01 L-03 (ISO) W
----- 127284

O 051154Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA BAHRAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE 3442

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO EGYPT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA SAUDI ARABIA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT KUWAIT

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 1289

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS : ETRD, PFOR, BEXP, BA, US

SUBJECT : POST ASSESSMENT OF REACTION OF PROSPECTIVE ANTI-BOYCOTT
LEGISLATION

REF : (A) STATE 220131 (NOTAL); (B) STATE 216549

1. AS WE HAVE NOTED IN REPORTING OVER THE PAST YEAR REGARDING THE GOVERNMENT OF BAHRAIN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE ARAB BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL, THE BAHRAINIS ARE IN NO SENSE MAKERS OR BREAKERS OF BOYCOTT POLICY OR ITS IMPLEMENTATION. WE HAVE FOUND VERY LITTLE ENTHUSIASM LOCALLY FOR THE BOYCOTT; ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE IS NO DISPOSITION TO ABANDON

IT EITHER--UNLESS THE LEAD WERE TAKEN BY EGYPT, SAUDI ARABIA OR OTHER "MODERATES"--WHICH LEADERSHIP BAHRAIN MIGHT FEEL COMFORTABLE IN ACCEPTING.

2. THERE ARE PERHAPS THREE OR FOUR PEOPLE IN THE GOB WHO HAVE IN ANY SENSE A SOPHISTICATED UNDERSTANDING OF DOMESTIC DYNAMICS OF USG

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POLICY TOWARD THE BOYCOTT. THERE ARE VIRTUALLY NONE IN THE MERCHANT

COMMUNITY WITH THAT KIND OF UNDERSTANDING ABOUT OUR SYSTEM. WHILE WE HAVE ATTEMPTED TO KEEP IMPORTANT GOB OFFICIALS (MINISTERS OF COMMERCE AND FINANCE) INFORMED OF BOYCOTT-RELATED DEVELOPMENTS OVER THE YEAR, WE ARE NOT CONVINCED THAT THE ISSUE IS FOLLOWED CLOSELY--OR IS EVEN SEEN AS BEING OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO THE GOB. THEY WOULD BE UNHAPPY

AT ANY LEGISLATION WHICH WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF REDUCING COMMERCIAL TIES WITH THE U.S. BUT THEY WOULD LIVE WITH SUCH REDUCTION RATHER THAN ABANDON THE BOYCOTT.

3. OUR FEELING IS THAT GOB POLICY MAKERS WOULD FIND SCANT SOLACE IN BEING TOLD THAT THE RESULT OF THE EXECUTIVE'S OPPOSITION TO ANY NEW BOYCOTT-RELATED LEGISLATION IS TOUGHER LEGISLATION THAN MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE CASE IF THE ADMINISTRATION HAD COMPROMISED (PARA 11, REFTEL). AFTER ALL THEY WILL DEAL WITH THE FINAL RESULT OF OUR DOMESTIC DEBATE; WHILE THERE MAY BE SOME ACADEMIC INTEREST IN WHO WAS

ON WHICH SIDE, THE END RESULT WILL BE THE MAJOR FACTOR OF INTEREST. MORAL: VIEWED AT LEAST FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THIS TINY SHAIKHDOM, ADMINISTRATION POLICY SHOULD BE BASED ON ITS PERCEPTIONS OF HOW TO GET

THE BEST POSSIBLE LEGISLATION RATHER THAN BEING UNDULY CONCERNED WITH ARAB PERCEPTIONS THAT THE ADMINISTRATION GUYS ARE THE ONES WITH THE WHITE HATS.

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